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NSC BRIEFING

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BURMA

I. Yesterday in Burma, General Ne Win assumed the Premiership of an army-backed "caretaker" government composed of non-political civil servants and professionals.

A. Action comes about a month after Premier Nu resigned as result of army pressure.

1. Ne Win promised national elections after six months.

II. Ne Win will accomplish nothing short of miracle if within six months he achieves things he has set out to do.

A. He is virtually committed to suppress militarily Burma's various insurrections during approaching dry season.

B. He is determined to insure election of overwhelmingly non-Communist parliament next April.

1. But if Ne Win permits free elections, he will risk gains by Communist-led National United Front at expense of warring factions of Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League.

2. If Ne Win rigs elections, he will open himself and army to charges of political interventionism from U Nu, the Communists and possibly even the opposing League faction.

C. There is possibility that Ne Win may also be hampered in carrying out internal reforms by pressure from Peiping.

III. U Nu in recent speeches showed concern that army may try to stay in power after six months' period, and take political sides.

A. Some of "political colonels" are already hinting it may be necessary for army to stay on indefinitely.